

SCIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE.

A singular feature of the explosion in the High Blantyre Colliery, Scotland, (by which 215 lives were lost) was the uprush of the burning gas through the downward shaft, though the gas is believed to have taken fire at the base of the upcast shaft. The shortest passage between the two shafts in the mine was fully a third of a mile long, and the ventilation threw out 100,000 cubic feet of air per minute. Although the reversal of this great current of air at the time of the explosion seems strange, it is not without precedent. The following extract from a lecture delivered by Professor W. W. Smyth before the Royal School of Mines, London, and recently published in *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, indicates the chances of such an occurrence: "Some strange effects occasionally follow these accidents; thus, the lecturer had seen one case himself where the ventilating current was reversed by the explosion, and all the smoke, etc., drawn back into the mine, where the air could be seen oscillating for a short time over the upcast, and then going bodily down. In this case every one in the mine was killed." Professor Smyth recommends that there should be a great discharge of air into the mine, and that miners abundant room for escaping from the ignited gas and the choke-damp which follows it. But, although this precaution was not wanting in the Scotch mine, no advantage could be taken of it, because the miners had run into a pocket of gas, and most of the passengers were thrown down and the shafts were also choked with debris. Many hours had to be spent in removing obstructions, and meanwhile, nearly all the inmates of the mine were suffocated.

The days of the lamplighter are numbered, and the time is at hand when he will exist only in story. Electricity is certain to take his place, because it can work more cheaply. It has been tried for the purpose of lighting and extinguishing 220 street lamps in Providence, and successfully over a district nine miles long. One man attends to the whole business, and does it in fifteen seconds. The method has now been on trial for some months, and a saving of \$10 per lamp per year is reported.

Several cases of hydrophobia have been recently reported in England, and as there is no country in the modern world where dogs are generally held in higher honor, these occurrences bring the warning care home to the Briton, and as a consequence he writes letters to *The Times*. Among the many communications, there is one from C. K. Laporte, a physician who has had experience in African travel, which is worth noting. He says that hydrophobia, so far as he is able to judge, is unknown in Africa. His theory is that the disease can only be broken up by inducing fear perspiration. In a fatal case under his care, repeated vapor baths failed to make the patient perspire. Since then, Dr. Laporte has received an account from a friend in China of the cure of a cobra in his employ, who had been bitten by a rabid dog, and sixty days afterward, showed unquestionable symptoms of hydrophobia. The medicine used was made by boiling a handful of the leaves of *elatior stramonium* in a pint of water till half evaporated, and then straining through a linen cloth; it was administered in one dose, in spite of the struggles of the patient. Before having given aversion to swallowing any liquid, Borel gave a violent paroxysm ensued, and rapid perspiration was elicited; after this, the patient slept eight hours, and on waking was wholly free from hydrophobic symptoms. As stramonium is one of the commonest weeds in our various lots, there would be little difficulty in procuring it, and much better results of its use would be obtained, as such a dose would probably be a fatal poison to a healthy man.

In fishing at the mouth of the Dee, Seaford, land-carriers are employed. The dove-net is on shore, and each boat takes out a pigeon. After the nets are drawn, early in the morning, the pigeon is dispatched and makes his return trip at a mile a minute. The messages prove useful in giving early details of the catch, and also in notifying of any pressing wants of the fisherman. The Rev. H. A. Hamond, the son of Mrs. Phoebe A. Hamond, of Jersey City Heights, who has been a Universalist minister, has renounced the faith of that denomination, and will enter the Congregational ministry. He has been proposed for membership in the Bethesda Church, Reading, Conn.

The Moravians are much troubled by the deficit in their mission funds, which has gone on increasing for six years. In 1870 it was \$1,469; in 1871, \$16,507; in 1872, \$16,069; in 1873, \$2,657; in 1875, \$19,646; in 1876, \$25,965. The total deficit for six years is \$82,182. There is a liability, therefore, to an average annual deficiency of over \$11,000.

Mr. Moody closed his work in Vermont, November 1, and has gone to New Hampshire. The effect produced in the City of Burlington was very great; the meetings held by Major White and Mr. McGranahan, in Rutland, were also very successful. Mr. Moody begins a series of meetings, to last three weeks, in Provincetown, R. I., December 24; in January he goes to Hartford, Conn.

The Roman Catholic Cathedral, in this city, stands on the corner of Fifth-ave. and Fifty-first-st., will soon be finished. The foundation was laid by Bishop Hughes, in 1858. The towers have been raised 150 feet to the base of the spires, which will ascend 235 higher. The Cathedral will contain ten side chapels. The interior will be fitted up with pews, and heated with steam.

The Henry B. Smith Memorial Reference Library, which the Alumni of Union Theological Seminary resolved last summer to establish, in honor of the late Professor Smith, is now opened for use. It contains 2,500 volumes, besides the standard theological periodicals. The sum of \$10,000 has been raised for founding and endowing this collection; it is intended to add to it the valuable reference books in the department of theology as they successively appear.

A Diet, or Congress of the Lutheran Church, to discuss subjects of importance to that body, is announced to be held in St. Matthew's Church, Philadelphia, December 27. It is expected that papers will be read by Drs. J. G. Morris and C. A. Stark, of Baltimore; Dr. Seiss and Professor Krauth, of Philadelphia; Professors Brown and F. C. of Gettysburg, and Dr. E. W. Webb of Newark. An Lorraine, a speaker of decided ecclesiastical connection, is invited by the managers to take part in the proceedings.

The Observer of this city still discusses and condemns the omission of the council at Edinburgh to celebrate the Lord's Supper. It says: "Deeply lamentable would it be, if at the beginning of this great movement it were discovered that there is not unity enough in the denomination to warrant the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to be celebrated and enjoyed in the midst of the solemn assembly. In union and communion are great things; this is no mere idle talk."

The first Union Missionary Conference ever held in Syria, closed its sessions at Acre, on Mount Lebanon, October 1. Fifty-seven delegates attended, among them thirty-seven native Syrians. The Syrians took an active part in the proceedings. Among the topics on which papers were read were the Sabbath, the Pastorale, the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the Southern Negroes, and the like.

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